

Basis of Design Report Available for Review

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

A document detailing the finer points of the Lower Fox River cleanup from Appleton into Green Bay is available to the public.

The contractor for Fort James Operating Co., Inc. (Georgia-Pacific) and NCR Corp. developed the document, which is referred to as the Final Basis of Design Report. It shows:

- PCB contamination is not spread evenly in the river, but rather in smaller areas
- a small area of highly contaminated sediment exists downstream and west of the De Pere Dam
- deeply buried contaminated sediment is present below the bottom of the authorized federal navigation channel with cleaner sediment above
- dredging contaminated sediment in several developed shoreline areas downstream of the dam may not be practical.

Both volumes of the report as well as all appendices, maps and drawings can be found at: www.dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/foxriver/bodrreport.html and at five local libraries (see page 7).

Because of these latest findings, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are considering a proposal to change the current cleanup plan that has been in place since July 2003. That plan, called the record of decision, outlines many technologies for various stretches along the river and bay. Dredging, letting

sediment settle naturally after being dredged, and pumping contaminated sediment through a temporary pipeline to a disposal site are among those technologies.

EPA and DNR will propose a new plan later this year that will use a combination of capping and dredging,

See Basis of Design Report, Page 7

Prep Work Begins in De Pere

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

In preparation for dredging to start as planned next spring, some construction activities are in the works now along Ft. Howard Road in De Pere.

The area in the Lower Fox River to be dredged (often referred to as operable unit 2) stretches from De Pere to Green Bay. So that project will run efficiently, the paper companies paying for this portion of the cleanup, NCR Corp. and U.S. Mills-Sonoco, Inc., started some construction activities in September.

According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg, gravel is being placed over the entire site to serve as an extra layer of protection. A heavy plastic liner also will be installed over the gravel to collect water after it is pumped from the river.

Asphalt "pads" will be put down in some places to serve as short-term (less than a day) storage areas for the dredged sediment that will be awaiting transport to an off-site landfill.

Much of the equipment needed for the cleanup will be coming in this year, so an access road is being built to accommodate the trucks that will be carrying tanks, pumps, sediment presses, water filters and wiring for utility hookups.

See Prep Work, Page 7

Popular Fish Hatchery To Get Facelift

By Tom Turner, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

State officials broke ground in a ceremony on August 1 opening a new era for the Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery in Waushara County. The hatchery renovation will bring with it the increased ability to produce more fish and to meet current environmental standards.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Secretary Scott Hassett was joined by Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton and other state officials to turn the first shovels of earth and formally begin the \$15.9 million phase 1 overhaul of the 100-year-old facility. Wild Rose produces brown trout and Chinook salmon, muskellunge, hybrid muskellunge, suckers, northern pike, walleye and lake sturgeon. The existing hatchery will continue to produce at its current level until the new facility is complete.

Mike Staggs, director of fisheries for DNR, said that about 94 percent of the trout and salmon produced at Wild Rose are stocked in Lake Michigan and are critical to maintaining the Lake Michigan sport fishery.

“Fishing generates \$2.3 billion in economic activity, supports 26,000 jobs, and provides \$90 million in tax revenues for state and local governments,” added Lawton. “It is the economic anchor for our state and for many local communities including my hometown, Algoma.”

Joining Lawton and Hassett at the ceremony were members of the natural resource damage assessment trustee council, the natural resources board, and



Breaking ground for the new Wild Rose Hatchery were (from left) hatchery manager Steve Fajfer, DNR fisheries director Mike Staggs, Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, DNR Secretary Scott Hassett, DNR Northeast Region Director Ron Kazmierczak and Miron Construction Project Manager Ben Samolinski.

representatives of stakeholder groups and fishing organizations. Officials of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Service, University of Wisconsin System and members of Wisconsin's legislature were in attendance along with Waushara County, town and village officials, contractors, DNR staff and the public.

Funding for this phase as well as two more phases of the upgrade will total nearly \$24 million. About \$6 million is coming from NRDA dollars from the paper companies responsible for the PCBs in the Lower Fox River. The remaining amount is from federal excise taxes on fishing and boating equipment and from the sale of Great Lakes trout and salmon stamps. No general purpose state revenue is being used.

See **Fish Hatchery**, Page 3

G-P Suspends Permit Application; Public Meeting, Comment Period Cancelled

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Plans to solicit comments from the public on a hazardous waste permit application were cancelled by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in July after Georgia-Pacific asked the agency to “suspend” its application.

The application was submitted to EPA’s Toxic Substances Control Act program for a coordinated approval with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. If both agencies had agreed that the technical aspects met TSCA’s requirements, Georgia-Pacific would have been able to build a new cell in its existing landfill on the west side of Green Bay to legally accept high levels of PCB-contaminated sediment dredged from the Lower Fox River. The Green Bay West Landfill, which has been operating for about 40 years, currently accepts material with lower levels of PCBs, including sediment from the

Lower Fox River 56/57 demonstration project of 1999.

Since EPA closed this application file, the company would be required to re-apply and submit another application if it would like to build a new cell in the future. Then, the same review and public involvement process would start again.

Meanwhile, dredging in the Lower Fox River from De Pere to Green Bay is on schedule to start in May 2007 (see related article on Page 1). The original cleanup decision made in 2003 specifies that contaminated sediment be taken to an approved landfill for proper disposal. Since there is no facility in Wisconsin that will accept high levels of PCBs (over 50 parts per million), the paper companies, NCR Corp. and U.S. Mills-Sonoco, Inc. still need to find a landfill out of state that will accept the dredged sediment.

Fish Hatchery from Page 2

Hassett stressed that the educational component that has always been a part of the Wild Rose Hatchery will be preserved. “We’ll be preserving some of the old facility, including some of the raceways and buildings, so people can understand what’s gone on here for the past 100 years,” he said.

Wild Rose has always been a popular attraction for Wisconsin’s children often accompanied by their parents and grandparents who had first visited the site with their own parents and grandparents many years ago. A new visitor’s center is part of the phase 1 construction and hatchery officials have been working with local leaders to ensure that the hatchery remains a big draw for Wild Rose, Waushara County and the whole area.

On-site construction began shortly after Gov. Jim Doyle signed the proper documents in mid-June. The first phase is expected to be completed by March 2008.

The Wild Rose Fish Hatchery is the largest coldwater fish hatchery in Wisconsin. It is old and has served well, but many of its existing facilities were constructed in the Civilian Conservation Corps era and are simply wearing out. Phase 1 is a complete renovation and expansion of the coldwater arm of the Wild Rose Fish Hatchery which currently occupies land on the west side of State Route 22 north of the town of Wild Rose in Waushara County.

The project work items in this phase include construction of new coldwater and brood stock production buildings; four raceway pavilions adjacent to the new coldwater building; a new high-capacity water supply system for the hatchery; a new effluent treatment system; a new visitor center; renovation of the office, shop building and existing garage; and a new entrance road. There is also a historic and educational component centered in restoration of buildings built in the CCC era.

The Fox River Current is featuring promising natural resource damage assessment projects in and near the Lower Fox River.

Spotlight On:

Oconto Marsh Resurrection

By Colette Charbonneau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Oconto Marsh Unit of the Green Bay West Shore Wildlife Area maintains water once again due to the support of the Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council, Ducks Unlimited, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Oconto Marsh comprises 220 acres along the west shore of Green Bay.

The marsh area is completely enclosed by a 3.5-mile dike. Water levels are raised and lowered in the impoundment throughout the year to manage the habitat at its optimum level for waterfowl (ducks, geese, and swans) and water bird (a bird that lives part of its life in or around water, especially the swimming, diving and wading birds) use.

The pump and water control structure used to manipulate water levels in the marsh was installed in the late 1960s. The pump was rebuilt in the early 1990s, but the water control structure was the original equipment.

“The pump and structure needed to be replaced to allow the marsh to be fully used by birds,” stated Wildlife Biologist John Huff, DNR northeast region. “Without the pump, water levels inside the dike are dependent on rainfall and a large portion of the marsh was dry most summers.”

Waterfowl nest and brood surveys conducted over the years in Oconto Marsh indicate that the marsh is one



An old pump and water control structure was replaced at the Oconto Marsh Unit of the Green Bay West Shore Wildlife Area. The pump and water structure manipulates water levels in the marsh.

of the most productive waterfowl areas on the west shore. It is also important habitat (homes) for migrating ducks and geese. Forster's terns have nested on the area and use it as a site to feed due to its proximity to the bay. Yellow rails have also been documented using the area. Colonial nesting birds including great blue herons, great egrets and black-crowned night herons use the marsh to feed throughout the summer. Oconto Marsh is also one of the few sites on the bay where bullfrogs have been recorded.

See Spotlight, Page 5

Spotlight from Page 4

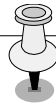
The old pump and water control structure was removed and replaced with a new pump in a concrete pump house with a separate water control structure. Approximately one-half of the dike had minor holes and slumped areas repaired to hold the impounded water. A portion of the dike was also built up and topped with gravel to improve access to the pump for maintenance and water level manipulation. Oconto Marsh wildlife thrives again due to water levels allowing full use of the area.

The natural resource trustees are comprised of DNR, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Michigan Attorney General, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For further information on natural resource damage assessment projects, contact Trustee Council Coordinator Colette Charbonneau, FWS, at Colette_Charbonneau@fws.gov or at (920) 866-1726.



The upper part of the new concrete pump house is added to the base. This "house" protects the pump from the weather.



Out and About...

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership is made up of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. These partners, as well as other supporting agencies, regularly provide speakers to organizations in the Fox Valley area. The following people recently made presentations:

June

- ◆ *Jim Hahnenberg*, EPA: University of Wisconsin watershed monitoring program teacher workshop, Green Bay; general Lower Fox River cleanup and Little Lake Butte des Morts dredging project.

July

- ◆ *Betsy Galbraith*, Oneida Tribe: Oneida Pow-Wow, Oneida; Lower Fox River/Green Bay natural resource damage assessment and Oneida fishery restoration project.

August

- ◆ *Colette Charbonneau*, FWS and *Greg Hill*, DNR: Kiwanis Club, Appleton; general Lower Fox River cleanup and restoration.

Paper Companies Complete Archaeological Study

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

To ensure that important cultural resources are not disturbed during cleanup of the Lower Fox River, an archaeological study of an area in De Pere was done in August by two paper companies.

The companies, NCR Corp. and Sonoco-U.S. Mills Inc., did an extensive study referred to as a phase I archaeological investigation, in preparation for dredging of the Lower Fox River in that area next spring. Such a study is required under the National Historic Preservation Act. A similar one was done by other paper companies around Little Lake Butte des Morts in 2004 before cleanup began there.

"It's required if we are going to do activities that may impact cultural resources," according to U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg.

To comply with NHPA, contractors will be digging 30 trenches on 3 acres of the companies' property along Ft. Howard Drive. Trenching has proven to be effective at other sites in identifying possible cultural deposits buried underground. Archaeologists will also do visual inspections as well as take soil samples. If cultural items once belonging to settlers or tribes are found, the archaeological site limits will be determined as well as their potential eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

"Steps need to be taken to ensure that resources are not adversely affected," Hahnenberg explained. "If they are going to be affected, the best option is to avoid them."



To comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, an extensive archaeological investigation was done in an area in De Pere. This study was done to ensure that important cultural resources are not disturbed during the cleanup of the Lower Fox River.

Although dredging in the river from De Pere to Green Bay isn't scheduled to start until next year, this study precedes the construction of a temporary facility to process PCB-contaminated sediment and to treat water that will be dredged from the river on the west bank just north of the De Pere Dam. A report on the findings will be completed before this work can start.

EPA is required to oversee this investigation, which also includes consulting tribal governments throughout the Midwest. Hahnenberg has contacted a number of tribes in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri and Kansas. Those who are interested in participating in this process will provide comments on the study or additional information for consideration in the final report. The paper companies are required to invite area museums, governmental entities, universities and historical societies to participate in the study.

Basis of Design Report *from Page 1*

monitoring, and eliminating the pipeline. Water would be squeezed from the contaminated sediment near the dredge site. Leftover sediment would be trucked out of state to a facility licensed to receive hazardous waste.

“This new information gathered for planning site cleanup gives us an opportunity to develop an approach that should be at least as protective as the original plan,” said EPA Remedial Project Manager Jim Hahnenberg. “It should also be easier to implement, and in a faster way, because we will be using technologies that have worked on other projects.”

A comment period and public meeting on EPA’s and DNR’s new proposed plan that could possibly lead to an amendment of the 2003 decision is set for this winter. After the agencies review and respond to comments, they will make a final decision by spring 2007.

Information Available at Local Libraries

The Intergovernmental Partners invite the public to review technical reports, fact sheets and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the local libraries listed below. Information repositories at the public libraries in De Pere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown have been discontinued. However, binders containing fact sheets are being maintained at these locations as well as at the following repositories:

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 107 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5205



An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the final site cleanup plan was based, is also available for review at two DNR offices: 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, Wis. and 101 S. Webster St., 2nd Floor, Madison, Wis. An administrative record is also available at the EPA Record Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago, Ill.



Check out these Web sites:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/foxriver/index.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver/>

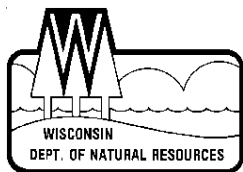
<http://contaminants.fws.gov/Issues/Restoration.cfm>

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/nrda/index.html>

Prep Work *from Page 1*

“A lot of equipment will be brought in this fall so it will be ready to hit the ground running in the spring,” said Hahnenberg. “Building our operations area and assembling and hooking up the equipment now will help us do that.”

Construction work will end in November and resume in April.



Prepared by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Supporting agencies include Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by all members of the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership.

INSIDE

FOX RIVER CURRENT

Basis of Design Report Available for Review

Prep Work Begins in De Pere

Popular Fish Hatchery To Get Facelift

G-P Suspends Permit Application; Public Meeting, Comment Period Cancelled

Spotlight On: Oconto Marsh Resurrection

Out and About...

Paper Companies Complete Archaeological Study

Web Site Addresses

Information Repository Locations

1

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

7

Fox River Current is published bimonthly by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership. Its purpose is to provide up-to-date information about cleanup and restoration efforts on the Lower Fox River. Call Greg Swanson at (608) 264-6024 to request a subscription or alternative format. Feedback on articles and ideas for future issues are welcome. Send comments to Greg Swanson, *Fox River Current*, DNR, CE/8, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or e-mail <gregory.swanson@dnr.state.wi.us>



Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590



Reproduced on Recycled Paper